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Partnership Between City, Local Colleges, Adult Education, Veterans Groups to Provide Job Training, Educational Advancements and Other Services

Once Completed, Center will Aid in Redevelopment of Downtown

UTICA, NY-Today, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24) highlighted the commencement of construction of a Community Access Center in Downtown Utica made possible by \$166,250 in federal funding secured by Arcuri in the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. Arcuri was joined for the announcement by Utica Mayor David Roefaro, and representatives from the Utica Veterans' Outreach Center, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES and the Utica School of Commerce, SUNY-IT and Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) at the future home of the Access Center located within the Utica Center for Development (UCD).

"The next generation is the key to our success as a region and anything we can do to keep our young people here and engaged in the community is critically important," **Arcuri said**.

"Modeled on the success of Main Street SUNY Cortland Downtown, I have worked with our colleges, adult educators, and veterans' community to create a local partnership that will maximize workforce development, increase job placement and ensure that our home-grown talent stays right here in the Mohawk Valley. And because of its location at the UCD, this center will become an asset to our returning veterans and aid in the redevelopment of Downtown Utica."

Utica Mayor David Roefaro said, "Today, Congressman Arcuri brought home a win for Downtown Utica. This Access Center will complement our 'Rust 2 Green' program by bringing even more students Downtown. Where there are students, there are businesses, and Congressman Arcuri understands that. He understands our area colleges hold the key to more jobs and more Downtown development. Moreover, today's announcement showcases a federal seal of approval for our goals to launch a Downtown Veteran Center. Already, this center is

helping me catalyze more development and more projects; all while showing support for our area veterans and their families. We couldn't do any of this without the Congressman."

"Our goal is to provide veterans, their families and others in the community with job training and other educational services that will act as a gateway to long-term employment in the area," **said Howard Mettelman, District Superintendent of Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES.**

"I want to thank Congressman Arcuri for working to create a local partnership dedicated to providing these services to the community and for securing the funding we needed to renovate space to house the Access Center downtown."

The \$166,250 in funding secured by Arcuri will go towards the renovation of space at the Utica Center for Development in Downtown Utica. The Center will provide veterans, their family members and others in the community with continuing education classes, including computer operations, business development classes. It will also offer introductory classes in emerging career fields, including those in the healthcare sector and green technology, as well as educational counseling and other services to aid veterans and others in their transition to local and sustainable jobs and careers.

The Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES, the Veterans' Outreach Center, Utica College, SUNY-IT, MVCC, Utica School of Commerce and Hamilton College will team up to offer services at the Access Center. It is hoped that in the future a combination of non-credit community education and foundation-level college courses will offer participants a bridge to certificate-level programs at the partnering colleges or other local business institutions.

Previously, Arcuri secured federal funding for SUNY Cortland to develop curriculum for its "Building Community Leaders" civic engagement and leadership program that takes place at Main Street SUNY Cortland in Downtown Cortland. The wildly successful demonstration project, established a set of academic programs in civic engagement and leadership to address community needs and motivate young people to remain in New York State after graduation.

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